10-1-1967

The Opinion - Vol. 07, No. 01

Fuller Theological Seminary

Thomas F. Johnson

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

the opinion

Vol. VII, No. 1 October, 1967

SALVATION HISTORY AND WORSHIP

by Oscar Cullmann

Within the limits stated in the previous chapter, while taking its norm strictly from the Bible, the proclamation of the Church today must point to God's rule and the unfolding of his saving plan in relation to the events of our time. But alongside this form of the 'presentation' of salvation history, an event which in fact actualizes the past and future of salvation history takes place in the Church, in worship, in the liturgy. Here in a direct way the past and future of salvation history become present, and nowhere does the central role attached to salvation history appear more evident than in this highly significant fact that the whole worship of the Christian Church, like Jewish worship, is oriented towards salvation history. Here again we can only repeat that a remarkable hiatus between practice and theory arises as soon as the salvation-historical basis is given up in theory. In that case the 'Church year' can no longer be significant; and in all honesty it is better to give it up. What meaning have Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost if they do not continually allow us to experience anew and in the present the development of the saving process in the past in connection with its further development in the present? The fact that the saving events wrought in Christ are to be thought of not only punctually, but in their relationship to salvation history, is nowhere more strongly expressed than in liturgy. The Church year originated, of course, in post-biblical times. But the liturgical presentation of the past and future of salvation history is already present in the salvation history of the Bible.

Even within the province of the Old Testament and Judaism, ancient feasts, originally having an agrarian character, are historicized. Hence the old Passover feast, originally associated with farming, is connected with the Exodus from Egypt, and this once-for-all event now becomes present each year. The same thing happens with other feasts. The harvest feast becomes a feast of the giving of the Law at Sinai. It is interesting to see how the developing salvation history seizes upon these feasts in the new covenant and connects them with the central Christ event—at Easter the death and resurrection of Christ are made present, at Pentecost the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. Later, this historicizing takes hold of pagan feasts which originally had a totally unhistorical character. The

(continued on page 3)

* * * * *

 Oscar Cullmann is Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of Basel. A world-reknown scholar, he is the author of many books including Christ and Time, Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr, and The Christology of the New Testament.

EDITORIAL

"The chief goal of Fuller Theological Seminary is the preparation of men and women effectively to fulfil the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ." As one means toward the realization of this official objective, the Seminary seeks to foster "a sense of community which provides a setting for Christian learning, nurture, and fellowship." This is a worthy goal, for if we cannot live a "life together" in our study, growth and relationships now, we have no right to expect that we will be able to do so when we leave to carry out our calling in Christ's Church.

Yes, we must not only have "a sense of community" but actual community, a dynamic fellowship that will, of necessity, be both fragile and enduring, a gift of the Spirit. Such community will be ours when, and only when, we realize, conceptually and in practice, that worship is the foundation and life-giving center of any Christian community, whether that community is Bonhoeffer's prison "parish" or Fuller Seminary.

Worship unites us and gives us koinonia, because when we worship, our differences become irrelevant, our sins become forgiven, and we attend to God, our Father. It is not debatable whether there shall be worship at Fuller Seminary, If we wish to realize the objective for which we exist, we must worship.

The form that worship takes is not prescribed; indeed, it cannot be, for in its essence worship is an act of God, not man. God will not be coerced by our forms. However, form is not a matter of indifference. There is a theology of worship, a Biblical understanding of what it means for God's people to commune with Him. From this theology certain conclusions can be drawn for the practice of the worshipping community. For example, worship should include confession, praise, prayer, and preaching. Some services of worship better embody this theology than others. We must be flexible, but we must seek with seriousness to worship according to the Word of God (and not necessarily according to "how we have always done it") and according to His Spirit (and not necessarily according to how we happen to feel about it).

So, this first issue of the opinion 1967-68 is dedicated to stimulating our reflection on worship. May God grant that we seek to know and to do His will on this vital matter.

SALVATION HISTORY AND WORSHIP (continued)

festival of the sun, the 'sol invictus', is thus connected with the celebration of Christ's birth. Sunday observance goes back, of course, to the earliest period of the Church, and each week it serves to make present the central event of the whole saving process—the resurrection of Christ. But later on it is connected with the pagan astral significance of the day in such a way that, as in the case of the celebration of Christmas, the relationship to the sun is completely subordinate to the meaning which the day derived from salvation history.

Incidentally, even where the liturgy is related to creation in the Old Testament, it stands in the closedt relationship with salvation history in contrast to the liturgical use of creation myths in pagan religions. This accords with what was said above about the historicizing of myth.

It may be shown, and has rightly been shown by Old Testament scholars, how the critical events of Israel's history—Exodus, Sinai, the entry into the land of Canaan—were used liturgically. Scholars usually emphasize in this connection that the narratives about the historical events were fixed for the first time in the liturgy. The liturgy is therefore thought of as the Sitz im Leben of the respective narratives. The correct element in this view is that the narratives as such received their formation in the liturgy. It is also correct that individual features of the narratives owe their origins to worship. It would, however, be the exaggeration of a correct observation if the historical fact were regarded as an invention created for the first time by the liturgy, for the process was really circular. The event itself gives the impulse for its liturgical presentation. The latter gives the impulse for the literary fixation of the event. The narrative accounts of the event are in turn influenced in such a way that liturgical elements are also taken up in historicized form.

What transpired in the liturgy was set down in literary form in the Psalms, and they are especially related to the saving events of Israel's history. Here we really see what salvation history meant for the life of the Israelites and what it can mean. Anyone who today asserts that salvation history is interesting only for the knowledge of the past ought to learn better from the Psalms. The thankfulness expressed in them for the great saving events is deeply felt and does not just arise from liturgical rhetoric.. The fact that salvation history is infinitely more than a theological concept finds confirmation here. Here is where the heart of all the biblical life in faith actually beats. This thankfulness of faith for the divine saving events is also basic to the whole New Testament. It is expressed not only in the spontaneous, prayerful outcry of Rom. 11.33f., often quoted in this work, which the apostle is forced to make in view of his insight into the salvation-historical revelation about the way of the gospel, but in all the doxological formulas that Paul and the writers of the other New Testament books have derived from the Church's liturgy or have shaped themselves. Certainly salvation history can degenerate into a rigid theological theory. But wherever it enlivens worship; as in Israel and the early Church, and indeed creates a new cultic form, its entire dynamic becomes apparent.

All the worship that we hear about in the Bible makes the past and future present. This is true even for Jewish worship. However, by the tension between 'already' and 'not yet', between fulfilment of the past and expectation of the consummation, in the Christian Church the correspondence between the theme of salvation history and its realization in worship

is complete. The fulfilment of the past and the expectation of the consummation, are experienced in Christian worship as present realities. We have often referred to the fact that the tension is already abolished in Christ, although for us it still continues. This relaxation of tension in Christ becomes visible in early Christian worship, for there Christ is present at the same time as the crucified and resurrected Lord and as the coming Messiah.

Because Christ's presence becomes a reality in the fellowship meal, early Christian worship, except for missionary services, is unthinkable without the breaking of bread. In the early Christian Eucharist, the Last Supper of the incarnate Christ, the Passover meals of the resurrected Lord and the Messianic feast of the coming Christ all become present at once. The crucial phases of salvation history are in this way all bound up with one another. Wherever Christ himself is present today, his salvation-historical activity becomes visible in all its extension.

Of course one can make a valid distinction between the presentation of the past and the repetition of the past. The eph' hapax, the once-for-all character of the various Christ events of salvation history, may not be given up. The misinterpretation that Christ is crucified anew each time the Euhharist is celebrated must be avoided. Catholic doctrine in fact attempts to escape this conclusion, and the over-simplified objections of Protestantism which do not heed this effort are really unjustified. Nevertheless, the question must be raised whether the sacrificial theory of Catholicism does not further such a misunderstanding, in practice coming dangerously close to the thought of a repetition.

The problem of the relationship between eph' hapax and the presentation of the past is ultimately that of salvation history itself, for which the complex relationship between the constant plan of God and its historical development is characteristic. It is the problem of the relationship between the vertical and the horizontal. We have often referred to this relationship in other contexts. We encounter it in a particular way in the Gospel of John. On the one hand, this Gospel presents a view in which the christological periods are so enmeshed that their distinctions in Christ hardly appear visible any more. On the other hand, the unique character of the life of Jesus is so strongly emphasized that the once-for-all-ness of the phases in salvation history grows out of the life of Christ. The manner in which they are summed up in Christ brings the development of salvation history particularly to light.

This intertwining is shown in what happens in the Church's worship. The whole Christ, including the crucified Lord, is experienced in the Eucharist, but as the Eucharist is celebrated today after his death and after his resurrection, it can only be the exalted Lord at the right hand of God who is present. The christological activity has reached the stage which the first Christians describe with the words of Ps. 110 as 'Christ's sitting at the right hand of God'. This stage they also express in their confessions with the formula Kypios Christos . If what transpires in worship gives us a survey of the Christ event in its whole extension in salvation history, including the cross, it nevertheless must not be forgotten that our worship today does not escape from the context of the salvation-historical development in which we find ourselves now.

Is this aspect sufficiently heeded in the Catholic mass and in the Protestant celebrations of the Lord's Supper? Not quite, I am afraid. That is why it is so important to me in this matter of the Eucharist to refer to the meals of the first Easter during which the resurrected Lord appeared

to his own. Certainly, when they came together to break bread in early times, the Christians looked back to these meals and not simply to the Last Supper of the incarnate one. Indeed, the thought of these meals probably overshadowed the meal on the eve of the crucifixion, and this explains the gladness on Acts 2.46.

In this sacramental event, the connection with the full Christ becomes visible, that is, with the incarnate Lord, who was with his disciples at the last meal, and the coming Lord, who will lie at the table with his own in the Messianic feast as a sign of his complete and inner relationship with them. This link with the history of salvation is already indicated in the words of institution referring to the wine that Jesus 'will drink anew'. In I Cor. 11.26 Paul also alludes to the eschatological consummation of the 'not yet' when he says 'until he comes'.

It befits the institution of the Lord's Supper that the death of Christ is made present in a speaicl way among the Christ events of salvation history. Although its 'once-for-all-ness' must not be jeopardized by the thought of a repetition, we must still refer here to the present, real experience of the past in the anamnesis, just as the Johannine 'remembering' is more than a mere reminding oneself of a past fact.

The anchoring of the Eucharist in salvation history nowhere finds a more adequate expression than in the prayer 'Maranatha'. From Did. 14 and I Cor. 16.22 we see that it was actually a eucharistic prayer. The Church prays for Christ's presence in the midst of the fellowship of the Lord's table. But the Church prays in the same prayer for his final coming to the Messianic banquet, and it bases its faith on the certain answer to this prayer in the fellowship of the apostles with the Christ who appeared to them while they were sitting at the table at Easter. The same salvation-historical relationship finds expression in the weekly celebration of Sunday. Sunday as the Day of the Lord (hemera tou kyriou) refers backwards to the resurrection of Christ and forwards to the eschatological 'Day of the Lord', which in the Old Testament is the yom Yahweh (LXX—hemera tou kyriou).

Hence the important thing for John's Gospel, in contrast to the Synoptics, is not to show merely the relationship of the Eucharist to its institution. A much wider aspect of the Christ event is illuminated by the Eucharist—the whole life of the incarnate Christ. Several events in the life of Jesus as it is depicted by this Gospel point to the Christ present in the Eucharist—above all, the Feeding of the Five Thousand in chapter 6, and very probably the miracle at Cana in chapter 2 and other episodes. Thus the Eucharist depicts the whole 'historical Jesus'.

The miracle of the manna points beyond the life of Jesus, primarily, of course, to show the incompleteness of this miracle in comparison with the true miracle of the bread in the Eucharist (Ch. 6).

Even baptism, too, is related to events in the life of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Paul relates baptism to the events of salvation history in the old covenant—specifically, the Exodus. The symbolic baptismal sketches in the catacombs prove that the relationship of baptism to salvation history was more than a piece of playful ingenuity for the early Church, and that this relationship was actually experienced as a present reality in the ceremony of baptism.

The salvation-historical relationship of worship forwards, to eschatology is indirectly confirmed by the Apocalypse. Up to now we have found that all worship signifies an anticipation of the end. In worship the end becomes present. Thus the writer can make use of symbols derived from early Christian worship to depict the eschatological drama which is in the last resort indescribable. Against the background of the conviction that what occurs in worship already realizes the end now, these symbols clamoured to be used. Only they can approach what a description of the eschatological events wishes to express. Thus the trumpet, the instrument of Jewish worship, had long ago become an eschatological instrument that would announce the coming of the point in time determined by God in his authority. We must not forget that according to Rev. 1.10 the seer has his vision 'on the day of the Lord', the day when the Christians experience the resurrection of Christ in worship. In Rev. 3.20, ('Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me') the thought of a union with Christ at the end stands in the foreground. The use of the traditional symbol of the Messianic feast within the Apocalypse is, nevertheless, inspired by the Church's meal at worship. The whole book could and should be explained in the light of early Christian worship.

Jewish and Christian worship are essentially unintelligible without salvation history. Just as Jewish and Christian theology are robbed of their substance if salvation history is eliminated from them, as was attempted in Gnostic syncretism, so Jewish and Christian worship cease to have what distinguishes them from the worship of the rest of the religions of antiquity when they lose their relationship to the once-for-all events and the eschatological event bound up with them, and use myths instead to symbolize the meaning of worship.

* * ** *

LUTHER ON WORSHIP

by Richard A. Bower

> The event which we call worship consists simply in this, that our well-beloved Lord himself speaks to us by His Holy Word, and we, for our part, speak to him by our prayers and hymns of praise.
>
> Martin Luther, 16th century

Worship always has been at the heart of Christian life. The New Testament witnesses that the Church began with an assemby of worshipers (Acts 2:1, 46-47), and at the end of time will be established in the New Jerusalem as the congregation of the true worshipers of God (Rev. 22:1-5). But it has not always been apparent what true worship is. The history of the Church, in a sense, is the history of her attempts to work out a valid mode of worship. It was no accident that the Reformation of the sixteenth century brought about reform in liturgy. If God had spoken to his Church, calling her to renewal, then the Chruch must respond through renewed and reformed worship.

Martin Luther has been critized by some modern liturgical reformers as being thoroughly conservative and showing no real creativity in his

* * * * *

Richard A. Bower is a senior at FTS, a graduate of USC, a past editor of the opinion, and President of our student body.

liturgical reform. Indeed, he roundly criticized the "innovators," those who "itch for new things", (LH, p. 89) and he worked only within the framework of the existing Roman rite. Leupold said of Luther that "all of Luther's reforms were simple revisions of the service than in use. He never engaged in liturgical research or reconstruction." (LH,p.xv).

Yet one would have to look hard to find evidence that Luther prized tradition for tradition's sake. In fact, he was so indifferent to the absolute validity of traditional forms, he almost seemed to say that anything meaningful is valid. "We can spare everything except the Word" (LH, p. 14). "All that matters is that the Words of Institution should be kept intact . . ." (LH, p. 31). "Do not make it /the German Mass/ a rigid law to bind or entagle anyone's conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where, and how you find it to be practical and useful." (LH, p. 61) In these brief quotations we begin to see Luther's main concern: like St. Paul, his main concern was the building up of the saints. For Luther in sixteenth century Saxony, worship was to be designed to serve the interests of the young and unlearned. And to this end Luther saw that faithful preaching of the Word was all important. His main criticism of the Roman services was "that men made laws, works, and merits out of them—to the detriment of faith—and did not use them to train the youth and common people in the Scriptures and the Word of God . . . That is the work of the very devil" (LH, p. 62).

Luther was, in a sense, a traditionalist. And he reacted to innovation on two grounds: (1) as mentioned above, his primary concern was for the spiritual welfare of the people, and he opposed, consequently, those radicals who thoughtlessly disrupted the people with their innovations, and who made a necessity of radical liturgical reform; (2) due to his artistic integrity, Luther moved with caution, desiring to make changes only when he could produce something better than that which was to be replaced.

One of Luther's earliest works on liturgical reform was a tract entitled Concerning the Order of Public Worship. Published in 1523, this tract provided guidelines for weekday services in Wittenberg and elsewhere in Saxony. The daily mass had been terminated the same year, and there was need for a daily service to replace it. Luther suggested that daily mass be replaced by a Mattins and Vesper service, consisting of prayer, singing, preaching and instruction.

Most notable in this early tract is Luther's insistence on the importance of the preached Word. Here at the outset Luther's primary concern is manifested, a concern which was to guide all his further liturgical reform. He states that the worst abuse of contemporary worship was that God's Word had been silenced. "Know first of all that a Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God's Word and prayer, no matter how briefly . . ." (LH, p. 11). Later in this tract he says, "we can spare everything but the Word." (LH, p. 14) With this tract come no new liturgical developments. Only the emphasis is changed. Mass was still said on Sundays, with only minor changes, and still in Latin.

Later in 1523, at the insistance of Nicholas Huasmann of Zwickau, Luther wrote a small work entitled An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg (in Latin, Formula Missae). In this order for an Evangelical mass, Luther implemented some of the ideas he had developed in his earlier tract.

Luther indicated his hesitancy to make any changes in the Roman mass. As we previously mentioned, he was fearful of fanning the flames of those who foolishly delighted in novelty ("Such people are a nuisance even in other affairs, but in spiritual matters, they are absolutely unbearable")(LH, p. 19), and he was concerned for those weak in faith who might be offended at sudden change. Most of the mass remained in Latin. The reading of the Gospels and Epistles was changed from Latin to the vernacular for the sake of the common people. Other portions of the service in the vernacular were the sermon and a few German hymns. Luther most objected to the canon of the mass; "That abominable concoction drawn from everyone's sewer and cesspool" (LH, p.21). He was highly offended by the Offertories and the "mercenary collects," those elements of the canon which stressed the sacrificial concept of the Lord's Supper. For the present, however, Luther was satisfied to remove only the "superstitious" and "tedious" elements of the mass (i.e., the canon), leaving the main body of the mass intact.

In his first form of the Evangelical mass Luther was concerned to remain open concerning valid orders of worship.

> But in all these matters we will want to beware lest we make binding what should be free, or make sinners of those who may do some things differently or omit others. All that matters is that the Words of Institution should be kept intact and that everything should be done by faith. (LH, p.31)

In June, 1525 Luther penned a short exhortation to Evangelical Christians in Livonia (formerly in Estonia, now in the Soviet Union). In this tract Luther tries to show how the church is to steer the narrow course of liberty between licence and legalism. "For even though from the viewpoint of faith, the external orders are free and can without scruples be changed by anyone at anytime, yet from the viewpoint of love, you are not free to use this liberty . . ." (LH, p. 47). Luther makes this statement in order to stress the necessity of unity, a theme he has not heretofore pressed. Perhaps experience has begun to point to the practical necessity of liturgical unity. Though forms are nothing in themselves, we ought to surrender our freedom of opinion for the sake of uniform practice, "lest the common people get confused and discouraged" (LH, p.48). Still, Luther stresses that care be taken lest uniform practices be taken as "divinely appointed and absolutely binding laws" (LH, p.48).

Luther's major work in liturgical reform came in 1526, the year of the German Mass. German liturgy in 1526 was no novelty. Already in 1522 Wissenburger in Basel and Schwebel in Pforzheim had instituted services in the vernacular. In 1523 Munzer introduced a German mass, Mattins and Verpers, all with original chants. There were others, and the multiplicity of German services produced the result Luther feared—confusion. Friends appealed to Luther to end the confusion by submitting his own German mass. We have already stated reasons for Luther's hesitancy in this matter. His response to this request was, "I am happy the mass now is held among the Germans in German. But to make a necessity of this, as if it had to be so, is again too much" (LH, p. 48). But Luther's desire for order and uniformity was to win out, and on October 29, 1525 the first completely German service in Wittenberg was held. Luther's German mass, Deudsche Messe und ordung Gottis diensts, was officially published and appeared in print early in 1526.

By 1525 one of Luther's primary concerns in liturgical reform was that the German mass, if it was to be German, must have a true German character. It was not simply a matter of translating the Latin service into German. Luther's interest in music in his student days bore fruit now, and helped him to see that new music was required to match the speech rhythm of the German language. "Both the text and notes, accent, melody, and manner of rendering ought to grow out of the true mother tongue and its inflection, otherwise all of it becomes an imitation in the manner of apes" (LH, p.54). In order to assure a proper musical dress for the German liturgy, Luther obtained the services of Conrad Rupsch (d.1525) and Johann Walter (1496-1570), both leading musicians of the Elector's court. It was Walter who earlier had been of great help to Luther in preparing his first hymnal, Geistliche Gesangbuchlein, in 1524. Luther, himself, composed a large part of the music for the Lessons as well as for the Words of Institution and the Sanctus hymn.

In Luther's preface to the German Mass he warns again against making this service a rigid law, "to bind or entangle anyone's conscience" (LH, p.61). In an important paragraph of this preface, Luther forcefully declares that his service has an evangelistic thrust. It is not for Christians (i.e., those who have "arrived"), but for those who are still becoming Christians or who need to be strengthened. It is the Christian as a sinner who needs the Word and Sacrament. "For such, one must read, sing, preach, write, and compose. And if it would help matters along, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing and have everything ring that can make a sound" (LH, p.62).

Some have criticized Luther's German Mass as an extreme and artless revision of the more stately and devotional Formula Missae. In the Liturgy of the Word all the private prayers of the celebrant are deleted, as is the Gloria in excelsis. The gradual and Alleluia were replaced by German hymns which people could sing. Luther is even more severe with the Liturgy of the Faithful. Maxwell feels that Luther "mutilated it beyond what the Lutheran teaching required," and provided "a most inadequate vehicle of devotion" (Outline of Christian Worship, p.79). Theologically, however, Luther apparently did feel drastic revision was needed. Luther's antipathy to the Roman canon led him to omit the offertory and the prayers of consecration, thanksgiving and intercession. Following the example of the old German Prone, Luther made use of a public paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. This paraphrase, which acted as an admonition to the congregation, was inserted after the sermon, preceeding the Lord's Supper.

In addition to the negative character of Luther's work in the German Mass there is his positive contribution of German hymnody. This contribution, along with the other features of the Mass that helped deepen the spirit of worship by giving the people a more intelligent part, placed Lutheran worship far closer to the New Testament ideal of common worship than was possible in the Roman mass. It must also be remembered that the liturgical shape of the German Mass was the result of practical considerations. Luther had to do with a spiritually unlearned congregation. His task was essentially one of instruction in the Word. Said Luther, ". . . the orders must serve for the promotion of faith and love and not be to the detriment of faith. As soon as they fail to do this, they are invalid, dead and gone" (LH, p.90). One may even suspect that Luther's heart lay with the Latin beauty of the Formula Missae. But it was not the most useful form of the day.

In summary we may point out several characteristics of Luther's view of worship which relate directly to our concerns today. First, Luther's reformed liturgies for the most part did not neglect the valid structures of the Roman rite. Protestant principle did not rule out catholic substance. In fact, Luther could say that his service was the truly catholic one, representing more faithfully the Faith and worship of the Church of all ages.

Secondly, Luther's service reinstated the early Church's balance between Word and Sacrament. Whereas the medieval Church had given priority to the Sacrament, to the neglect of the Word; and whereas much of later Portestant Christianity has given priority to the Word, to the neglect of the Sacrament; Luther (as did Calvin in Geneva) saw that true worship consisted of both Word and Sacrament.

Thirdly, Luther attempted to keep always before him a pastoral concern for the welfare of his people. As did St. Paul, Luther saw the aim of worship to be the building up of the community as the Body of Christ. In this is God truly glorified.

Lastly, and most significant for us today, Luther's service reflected his Biblical and theological committments. He allowed doctrine to determine the shape and content of common worship. Theological integrity was not sacrifieed for individualistic and subjectivistic concerns. Common worship for Luther begins with God and our knowledge of him; to the glory of God that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Bibliography

Leupold, Ulrich S., Ed. Liturgy and Hymns (LH), Luther's Works (American Edition), Vol. 53. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965.

Maxwell, William D. An Outline of Christian Worship. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

* * * * *

JOHN CALVIN ON WORSHIP

by David Foxgrover

Worship is a central theme in Calvin's discussion of man's responsibility to God and to his fellow. To be responsible to God we must know who God is, and for Calvin knowledge of God can be defined in terms of worship. The Catechism of the Church of Geneva reads that there is right knowledge of God "when he is so known, that his own proper honor is done him."[1] Concern for our fellow man also has its basis in worship, "the first foundation of righteousness". If men honor God as the judge of right and wrong, then "in accordance with the fear of his name" will man conduct himself properly in society (II,viii,11).

* * * * *

David L. Foxgrover is a senior at FTS and obtained his B.A. from Lawrence Un. in 1965.

[1]J.K.S. Reid, ed. and tr., Calvin: Theological Treatises, vol.xxii of The Library of Christian Classics (Phil., 1954), p.129. Hereafter, references to the Catechism of the Church of Geneva will be listed as GC, with page number following. For further references on the relation of worship to the knowledge of God see the following in: John T. McNeil, ed., Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, vols. xx,xxi of The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, 1960), I,ii,2; I,v,10; II, viii,1.

To discuss Calvin's views on worship I have used the Institutes of the Christian Religion and the Catechism of the Church of Geneva. Since both works are based on the Apostles' Creed, the Catechism is a good introduction to the Institutes, although several important themes are absent. I have also tried to present Calvin's own sequence of thought, for I feel that much of his force and persuasive power lies in his logical order.

I. Man knows he has a creator.

Calvin's theology of worship begins with the conviction that man knows the existence of his creator by two means: knowledge of himself and observation of the universe.

A proper knowledge of himself tells man that "the mighty gifts with which we are endowed are hardly from ourselves" (I,i,1). Since man is a creature, he cannot know himself properly unless he knows his creator. This is a central theme throughout the Institutes. Every man will claim that his oown "empty image of righteousness" is the norm for all righteousness. But, let man look upon the "face of God" and he will see that his righteousness is but "consummate wickedness". (I,i,2) Without knowledge of God man thinks he is righteous and good, without equal. Moreover, a sense of his immortality tells man that he somehow is related to his creator. On the immortality of the soul Calvin says that man has many "pre-eminent gifts" whereby man can "conceive the invisible God". (I,xv,2) Man is compelled to look beyond himself, Calvin states, for a knowledge of God as creator is naturally implanted in man's mind:

> There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity (I,iii,1)

Man can also know the creator's existence by contemplation of the universe:

> . . . he not only sowed in men's minds that seed of religion of which we have spoken, but revealed himself and daily discloses himself in the whole workmanship of the universe. (I,v,1)

Calvin frequently describes the universe as a "glorious theater" wherein we contemplate the magnificent works of God. (cf. I,vi,2 and II, vi,1). Another metaphor is that the universe is a mirror in which we behold God (I,vi,1).[2]

Calvin declares that the workmanship displayed in the universe is evidence of the artificer's majesty. This is displayed not only in "more recondite matters", but also in those which "thrust themselves upon the sight of even the most untutored". (I,v,2) The human body is another "mirror" of God's works (I,v,3), which shows itself to be "a composition so ingenious that its Artificer is rightly judged a wonder worker." (I,v,2)

II. Man knows that he has a creator. Man also knows that he is responsible to his creator.

Here conscience plays the key role. Conscience is "a certain mean between God and man, for it does not allow man to suppress within himself what he knows". (IV,x,3) Man's conscience reminds him that God is his

* * * * *

[2] Calvin also calls the sacraments a mirror in which we behold the riches of Christ's grace (IV,xiv,6), and the image of God in man is a mirror in which God can behold his glory (II,xii,6).

creator. (cf. I,xv,2) If man had his way, he would ignore God; but conscience tells him he is responsible to God: ". . . our conscience does not allow us to sleep a perpetual insensible sleep without being an inner witness and monitor of what we owe God . . ." (II,viii,2).

III. Man knows he has a creator to whom he is responsible, but his arrogance, pride and dullness prevent him from worshipping God properly. "Man is so shrouded in darkness of errors that he hardly begins to grasp through this natural law [his conscience] what worship is acceptable to God." (II,viii,1) This "seed of the knowledge of God" is corrupted by man himself. (I,vi,15)

Although God intended the natural revelation to communicate his fatherly favor, "we cannot by contemplating the universe infer that he is Father." (II,vi,1) Our dullness (another favorite term for Calvin; cf. I,v,15 and II,vii,14) prevents us from calling on God's name. Dullness is the opposite of worship.

IV. Since man does not know what is proper worship, God himself establishes it. God initiates worship of himself and declares how he is to be worshiped (cf. GC,p.109). If we follow our own inventions in worshipping God, we displease God and merit his wrath: "For God threatens . . . all ages with this curse, that he will strike with blindness and amazement those who worship him with the doctrines of men." (IV,x,16; cf. IV,x,23) However, God has given instruction about his proper worship. The Lord has "in his sacred oracles faithfully and clearly expressed both the whole sum of righteousness, and all aspects of the worship of his majesty . . ." (IV,x,30; cf. IV,x,8)

V. What, then, is proper worship of the creator? In a brief phrase, it is "a spiritual worship established by God himself". (II,viii,17) Calvin repeatedly uses three categories to define proper worship. They are trusting God, serving God, and invoking God. (Sometimes he adds a fourth, acknowledging God.) This order is followed in the Catechism and is mentioned several times in the Institutes. What "we owe to God," Calvin says, "may be conveniently grouped in four headings": adoration is the veneration each man renders to God; trust is the assurance of reposing in him that arises from knowing his attributes; invocation is resorting to his faithfulness; thanksgiving is the gratitude with which we praise him for all good things. (II,viii,16; cf. GC, pp.92ff., I,xv,22 for other descriptions of generally the same categories.)

We will now look more closely at each category.

To put his trust in God one must "affirm with his mind, that he is loved by him and that he is willing to be his Father and the author of his salvation." (GC, p.92) To make this affirmation one must know what God is like from his revelation of himself. In his revelation we see God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God is Father "primarily in regard to Christ", and from this He is also our Father. As Father we know God to be "Almighty", having all things under his power, and to be "Maker", for we see him in his works. (GC,p.93) Because we know God to be the almighty creator and Father, we can place our trust in him.

God the Son is set forth in the three-fold office of Christ as King, Prophet and Priest. In these offices Jesus is the proclaimer of the Father's will. As King Jesus gives "spiritual riches" and accords "freedom of conscience". (GC,p.96) He is anointed with the Spirit of wisdom and might, and is made Head of the church. (II,xv,5)

Jesus is our sacrifice and advocate as Priest. He "expiates our sins", appeasing the wrath of God, and "appears before God as intercessor and advocate on our behalf." (GC, pp.100-101) Because of Jesus' death and intercession we can approach God as our Father, and confidently depend on God's mercy. (Cf. II,xvi,6)

Jesus as Prophet of God to men "illumines them with the true knowledge of the Father," as the Catechism reads. (GC,p.96) Although conscience once convicted man of his sin in the radiance of God's glory, now Jesus Christ proclaims the news of God's grace, secured by his own sacrifice and intercession. (cf. II,xv,2)

God the Holy Spirit is the "bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself." (III,i,1) As King Christ bestows spiritual riches and as Priest he propitiates the wrath of God. Unless we are joined to Christ we will not receive his benefits. Through the Holy Spirit "we feel the virtues of Christ", and thereby the benefits of Christ are sealed in our hearts. (GC, p. 102;cf. III,i,3)

To trust in God is never to cease hoping in God as revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Service, the second part of worship, receives Calvin's earnest attention. Service is divided into service to God and to man. Nothing is more acceptable to God than obedience (II,viii,5), for the "proper rule for worshipping God is to obey his will". (GC, p. 107; cf. IV,x,15) for the relation of works to obedience.) To serve God is to obey him.

Calvin makes it clear that God has prescribed how we are to serve God and man, and that this prescription is still in force. (II,viii,1) He speaks of the Old Testament law, for he feels that man can do no better than to fulfill the Ten Commandments (cf. II,viii,51): "where the whole law is concerned, the gospel differs from it only in clarity of manifestation" (II,viii,4). There is no major disjunction between the law and the gospel; the gospel is the substance of what was once the shadows. (II,ix,4) Calvin frequently contends that Christ has been present in all true worship--even under the law (cf. II,vi,1 and IV,x,14).

The Decalogue describes obedience to God to be making God "pre-eminent among his people". (II,viii, 16; cf. GC,p.108) Secondly, we must never "subject God, who is incomprehensible, to our sense perceptions", and we must never worship any "images in the name of religion". Thirdly, we ought never to profane God's name. This commandment is discussed in connection with oath taking, which Calvin says is "a sort of divine worship". When we call upon God, "we confess him to be eternal and immutable truth . . ." (II,viii,23) Fourthly, we are to keep the Sabbath. To understand Calvin's view of the Sabbath is to note that it is a "spiritual rest, in which believers lay aside their own works to allow God to work in them." (II,viii,28;cf.GC, pp. 129-130) True, the Sabbath is the "outward keeping of a day", abolished with the other figures upon Christ's coming (II,viii,28; cf. II,viii,30), but, there are reasons for continuing to observe it. First, we are following God's own example (II,viii,30); second, the purpose and fulfillment of the ancient Sabbath "lies in the Lord's resurrection" (II,viii,34); thirdly, the Sabbath now embodies the "lawful order set by the church for the hearing of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and for public prayers." (II,viii,34) In sum, the Sabbath is now an external aid granted by God to "prevent religion from either perishing or declining among us." (II,viii,34)

The Second Table describes our service to men, which is based directly on our obedience to God. The Second Table "amply teaches what we owe men for the sake of God." (II,viii,50) We should love friend and enemy "since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves." Again, "we must love him /man/ because we love God." (II,viii,55)

One of Calvin's principles for interpreting the Ten Commandments is that if God forbids something, he is affirming its opposite. If "this displeases, the opposite pleases him". (II,viii,8) Therefore, our service to men is to be cast in affirmative action:

> We are accordingly commanded, 'if we find anything of use to us in saving our neighbors' lives, faithfully to employ it; if there is anything that makes for their peace, to see to it; if anything harmful, to ward it off; if they are in any danger, to lend a helping hand. (II,viii,39; cf. GC, p.115)

Finally, "our life shall best conform to God's will . . . when it is in every respect most fruitful to our brethren." (II,viii,54)

Invocation is the third aspect of worship. The source of all benefits is God himself; when "we invoke God, we testify that we look for good from no other quarter, and that we locate our defence nowhere else . . ." (GC,p.119;cf. I,ii,1) Our manner of praying should be intelligent and devout. (GC,p.120) In his exposition of the Lord's Prayer Calvin says, "the tongue without the mind must be highly displeasing to God." (III,xx,33) Devotion is awareness of want and misery and the desire to obtain grace from God who kindles in us the desire to pray. (GC, p.121; cf. III,xx,4-14, where Calvin gives four rules for praying). The hope that our prayer will be answered is called the "constant foundation of prayer". (GC,p.121) To pray believing in God's goodness is to pray correctly. (III,xx,14)

Prayer must be made in the name of Jesus Christ, for "thus it is laid down in express words . . ., that by his intercession he will contrive that we obtain what we ask (John 14:13)." (GC, p.123) Man is afraid to approach God in prayer, until "Christ comes forward as intermediary, to change the throne of dreadful glory into the throne of grace." (III,xx,17;cf. GC,p.123) Christ has also given us the form of prayer, so that we know "all that we may ask rightly of God profitably for ourselves". (GC,p.123;cf. III,xx,48) The Lord's Prayer epitomizes all that is requisite to pray. (cf. GC,p.123)

As we saw above, acknowledging God is sometimes added as the fourth part of worship. The Catechism describes acknowledgement to be honoring God in such a way that "the glory of all good may substantially reside entirely in him." (GC, p. 129)

VI. The Catechism poses the next, logical question: "By what road does one come to such blessedness?" (GC,p.129) Just as God has declared the content of proper worship, so has he given us outward aids to sustain us in this worship.

The center of these outward aids, and to be included among them, is the visible church, wherein occurs the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. The church is the body of Christ, and unless

we are united to the body with its other members, we can have no assurance we are united to the Head: ". . . no hope of future inheritance remains to us unless we have been united with all the other members under Christ, our Head." (IV,i,2)

The church is an aid to us, a source of hope and encouragement to keep us in the faith:

> So powerful is the participation in the church that it keeps us in the society of God. In the very word "communion" there is a wealth of comfort because, while it is determined what whatever the Lord bestows upon his members and ours belongs to us, and our hope is strengthened by all the benefits they receive. (IV,i,3)

Calvin also pictures the church as our Mother, apart from whose conception and nourishment there is no way to enter into life. (IV,i,4) Calvin is not overly idealistic; he knows that there will be faults in doctrine and sacrament. However, this ought not to estrange us from communion within the church. (IV,i,12) The church is also like a school, from which "our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed . . . until we have been pupils all of our lives." (IV,i,4)

It is within the church that we hear the preaching of the Word. God has given his Word to us in the Scriptures, and it is his own Spirit that gives us the conviction that it is nothing less than "certain truth come down from heaven". (GC,p.130;cf. I,vii,1) And in the church and the Sabbath God has given us opportunity for hearing the Word expounded in the company of the faithful. (GC, p. 130; cf. II, viii,33) It is God's will "to teach us through human means", and that his people should never be "destitute of prophets". (IV,i,5) We should not be reluctant to use these aids that God has provided. It is God's grace that "he deigns to consecrate to himself the mouths and tongues of men in order that his voice may resound in them." (IV, i,5) In fact, it is through "outward preaching of the Word" that the church is built up. (IV,i,5)

Joined to the ministry of the Word are the sacraments, "outward signs by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith". (IV,xiv,1) The sacraments occupy a prominent position, but they are to be seen as outward aids for spiritual worship. (cf. GC, p.131) God's promises are delivered to man by the prophetic Word and the Word made flesh, and the sacraments succeed these promises, with the purpose of "confinrming and sealing the promise itself, and of making it more evident to us . . ." (IV,xiv,3)

Without the spoken Word and the work of the Holy Spirit the sacraments are in vain. (cf. IV,xiv,5 and IV,xiv,9) However, let us quickly add that the Lord has promised to be present where the sacraments are properly celebrated. (cf. IV,xiv,17) Once we have been drawn by God's Word, the sacraments support our faith in that Word: "The sacraments, therefore, are exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God's Word. (IV,xiv,6) Calvin employs several words which show how he thinks of the sacraments as aids; e.g. they are called pillars, mirrors, seals which sustain, nourish and confirm our faith.

If we were purely spiritual beings we would need no such outward aids. But, "because we are of the flesh, they are shown us under the things of the flesh, to instruct us according to our dull capacity". (IV,xiv,6) To ignore these aids is to disobey God and to say we have no need of his aid. In administrative duties Calvin tried to institute weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper to correct the infrequent communion of the Roman mass. However, he was defeated on this measure and had to settle for a quarterly celebration of the eucharist.[3]

The sacraments have the same office as preaching, "to set forth Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace." (IV,xiv,17) It would be unthinkable to limit preaching to one occasion every three months, for we would be deprived of the Word. And yet, the sacraments are somewhat ignored, although "Christ is . . . the substance of the sacraments, and they do not promise anything apart from him." (IV,xiv,16)

These, then are the aids to worship, wherein we say that what God "has ordained remains firm and keeps its own nature, however men may vary." (IV,xiv,16)

Most noteworthy in Calvin's writing on worship is the prevenience of God. Before man attempts to worship his creator, God reveals himself and how he is to be worshiped. It is God's Spirit which urges man to worship and to pray, so that man's action is actually reaction, a response. It is true that those who worship in truth must worship in faith, but faith itself is a gift of God based on the knowledge of God's attributes. Man's feelings are subject to change, whereas God is able to fulfill his promise to always be present with man at worship. We noted, too, how God provides the aids to sustain man in his worship, as well as the proper means to worship.

Secondly, we noted the relation of worship to the knowledge of God. Only when we know God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can we worship him properly. An important emphasis here is that as we grow in the knowledge of God we should worship him more maturely; our study of theology should find its completion in doxology.

Worship within the context of the church is a third important factor. Indeed, worship occurs only within the church. The aids to worship, preaching of the Word and celebration of the sacraments, are given for the building up of the church to which all believers should be closely united. Worship itself is a unifying force in the church, and perhaps the most important one. In our own ecumenical times we will do well to know more about the theology of worship if we are to achieve any satisfactory unity.

Service to man is also an activity of the visible church. At a time when social concern is so relevant Calvin reminds us that concern for our brethren has its true basis in service to God which in turn is part of our worship of God.

Finally, we note the lack of an apologetical attitude. Calvin says frequently in the Institutes that God is his own witness, and this is definitely true in worship. When we are worshipping God we are also proclaiming God as he truly is, and we are giving an adequate account of our faith which comes from him.

* * * * *

[3]Reid, pp. 47-49. See the document, Articles Concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva 1537.

John Calvin on Worship--Sources:

McNeill, John T., ed., Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, vols. xx,xxi of The Library of Christian Classics, translated and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1960.

Reid, J.K.S., ed. and tr., Calvin: Theological Treatises, vol. xxii of The Library of Christian Classics, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1954.

* * * * *

So that the Seminary community may understand the reasons for change in Morning Chapel procedures, the Faculty and Student Chapel Committee offers this statement concerning worship, a statement which represents the guidelines by which the committee works.

1. Acknowledging that man's chief end is to glorigy God through his life and service, we affirm the centrality of worship in the life of the Christian community and in the life of the individual Christian.

We who engage in the task of theological reflection must do so in the context of worship, because our theology must always be confessional in character, thus demanding the context of prayer and adoration and the hearing of God's Word. There is no more difficult and potentially dangerous task for the Christian than that of theological reflection, whereby we reduce the mysteries of God to the level of human discourse and debate. Apart from the discipline of worship, we inevitably approach the ways and works of God with profane hands.

Our worship in the theological community must first of all be corporate in nature, because the task of theology is a corporate one; theology is not a private affair. We speak in the church, with the church, for the church, and to the church. This corporate task is reflected in the fact that we study together, eat together, and live together. Is it not self-evident that we ought above all to worship together?

2. True worship is a gift of God. Regular practice of corporate praise and prayer is essential to our seminary community, and is the sole function of the Chapel Service.

3. Worship as a complete act of God's address and our response should include the following:

a. Praise - because God is Lord over all and worthy of praise.
b. Proclamation (Scripture and Preaching) - because man as a Christian lives by the Word of God.
c. Confession of sins - because we have need daily to acknowledge our corporate and individual sin and to receive assurance of pardon.
d. Response of prayer and affirmation of faith - because it is the joyous service of Christians to respond to God's gracious address in Christ.

4. As our theology determines our understanding of worship, so it determines the ordering of the elements of worship. Realizing the variety of possible legitimate forms of worship, we suggest that:

a. The initial Call to Worship be followed by the preparation, that is, by Confession of Sins and the Assurance of Pardon.
b. The preparation be followed by hymns or psalms of Praise.
c. The initial act of Praise be followed by the Reading and Exposition of Scripture whereby we are called to joyful response in Prayer and Confession of Faith.
d. In prayer we consider intercession, petition and thanksgiving, keeping in mind the great needs of mankind, the Church universal, and of our own local community.
e. The service of worship be concluded with an invocation of God's blessing (Benediction).

* * * * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For further reading in the theology of worship see:

Cullmann, Oscar, Early Christian Worship, London:SCM (1953)

Hahn, William, Worship and Congregation, Richmond: John Knox Press (1963)

Maxwell, William, An Outline of Christian Worship, London: Oxford (1936)

Richardson, C.C., "Christian Worship," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (vol. 4), New York: Abingdon (1962).

* * * * *

From a letter of Sept. 18 to Paul M. Dutton from Thomas A. Pearson, First Presbyterian Church, Yakima, Washington

I hope you always find it difficult to picture yourself in the role of a pastor. The Pastorate, when properly understood, is the most demanding vocation there is. The man who would truly be a pastor is the man who is utterly preoccupied with God to the point where he is determined to be God's representative in a world that couldn't care less about God and in a Church where, in spite of appearances to the contrary, God is not really popular. Beneath the seeming indifference of the world and the deceptive zeal of the Church there is animosity. Men are willing to talk about God and they can be deeply religious, but man rebels against God's will to be man's God. Consequently, we are not called to the pastorate because it is respectable or because it is attractive or because it is successful or because it is influential, but simply because God wills to have men stand up for him and speak for him in the far country. When we begin to find it easy to picture ourselves in the role of a pastor, we

* * * * *

Paul Dutton is a junior at FTS and received his B.A. in Art History from UCLA in 1967. Thomas Pearson is an alumnus of FTS, Class of 1966, a graduate of Wheaton College, and is presently ministering in the First Presbyterian Church of Yakima, Washington.

have simply forgotten that we live in the far country where man still cries out, though in an admittedly more sophisticated way, "Crucify Him!" We dare not forget the words of our Lord recorded in Luke 6:22-23, 26. As for the prophets of old, my very best advice would be, read them again and again during your months and years in seminary. See whose ranks you have been called to join. It takes a young turk to be a prophet!

* * * * *

the opinion is published the first Wednesday of each month throughout the school year by students at Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 North Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, California. the opinion welcomes a variety of opinions consistent with general academic standards. Therefore, opinions expressed in articles and letters are those of the authors and are not to be construed as the view of the seminary, faculty, student council, or editors of the opinion.

Editor in Chief.....Thomas F. Johnson
Managing Editor.....Thomas S. Johnson
Literary Editor.....Clifford L. Swanson
Consulting Editor.....Charles C. Twombly
Consulting Editor.....H. Jeffrey Silliman

Past issues of the opinion are filed in the Reference Room of McAllister Library.